

FULL COUNCIL

30TH APRIL 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

MELTON LOCAL PLAN – THE VISION, OBJECTIVES AND KEY ISSUES

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Council with the proposed Vision, Objectives and Key Issues for inclusion in the new Melton Local Plan. These have been developed following meetings of the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups and a consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Council accepts the recommendations of the Melton Local Plan Working Group and approves the Vision, Objectives and Key Issues for inclusion in the new Melton Local Plan as set out in paras 3.21 to 3.25 below.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The new Melton Local Plan will set out the long-term spatial vision for the Borough, together with the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. The Melton Local Plan will guide the future development needs of the Borough and should be based on a clear vision for the area, along with a strategy for delivering it.
- 3.2 The Borough Council is keen to make sure that the new Plan is founded upon a vision which reflects the wishes of the wider community, as well as those policy requirements contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.3 To include as many people as possible in producing the new Melton Local Plan, the Borough Council has formed a number of Reference Groups to have a direct input into the content of the Plan. The Reference Groups include a wide range of interests and will consider all issues but have been drawn up to especially focus on subjects, as shown below:-
- Residents (Housing and Community Issues)
 - Environment (Environment and Green Issues)
 - Employment & Town Centre (Business, Retail and Leisure across the Borough)
 - Special Interests (Groups for the whole Borough)
 - Landowners and Developers
 - Young People (undertaken in a different format to other groups)

- 3.4 The first round of Reference Group meetings asked the question, “What Sort Of Melton Would You Like To See?”, and involved exercises to ascertain the community’s aspirations, needs and priorities which could then be used to inform the Vision, Objectives and Key Issues for the new Melton Local Plan.
- 3.5 To help ensure that the Local Plan is representative of the views of all Melton’s residents and businesses, and to meet the statutory requirements necessary in the formation of a Local Plan, a Regulation 18 consultation was also undertaken between the 10th February 2014 and the 24th March 2014.
- 3.6 The ‘Regulation 18’ consultation is the first stage of the statutory process in preparing the new Melton Local Plan and provides a scoping phase to the process.
- 3.7 In accordance with the legislation, Melton Borough Council notified key stakeholders of its intention to prepare the Melton Local Plan, and, invited them to consider what the new Melton Local Plan ought to contain. These stakeholders included members of the public and businesses on the authority’s consultation database; developers and landowners; neighbouring local authorities and parish councils; the Highways Agency; the Environment Agency; English Heritage; Natural England; and, utility providers.
- 3.8 The consultation was also promoted as widely as possible. Adverts were placed in the Melton Times, Leicester Mercury and Grantham Journal; and, notices were sent to Parish Councils for display on parish noticeboards. Drop-in sessions were held in Asfordby, Bottesford, Long Clawson, Waltham on the Wolds, and, in the Council Offices; whilst a market stall was also held on a Saturday in Melton Mowbray. Leaflets were provided to all primary schools in the Borough to be sent home for parents and sessions were held at John Ferneley College. Additionally, the consultation was widely promoted on social media through Twitter and Facebook, along with the Melton BC website and the Melton Local Plan’s own website.
- 3.9 The Borough Council has sought to collect representations from as wide a section of the community as possible through these methods, to ensure that the contents of the Local Plan, along with its Vision, Objectives and Key Issues, fully reflect the needs, priorities and aspirations of residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders.
- 3.10 **Melton Local Plan: Key Issues**
 The complex and cross-cutting nature of the new Melton Local Plan means that from the outset it is important to clearly articulate the key issues to be addressed by the Plan and agree these with our community and stakeholders. This will help to define the focus of the Local Plan and the expectations which are raised for its outputs; and, will be a reference point, or ‘golden thread’, against which to formulate future policy development.
- Key issues may cover areas such as how much development is needed; where should development take place; how do we protect the countryside; how do we tackle traffic congestion in Melton Mowbray; how can we help Melton Mowbray town centre; how do we address climate change; or, how can we improve the economy in the Borough.
- 3.11 **Melton Local Plan: Vision**
 A ‘vision’ is a statement of aspirations that describe a desired future.

The Local Plan will include a spatial vision for the Borough and provides a basis for considering strategic choices. This Vision will emphasise local distinctiveness with a focus on delivery through land use planning. The Local Plan's spatial objectives and strategic policies will then flow from the Vision.

3.12 **Melton Local Plan: Objectives**

Objectives are those things that need to be achieved in order to realise the Vision. The objectives will relate to the use and development of land as the basis for the policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan. The objectives will cover topic areas such as housing; jobs and prosperity; the environment; community development; and, safety and protection.

3.13 **Representations**

The discussions held by each of the Reference Groups were used to identify common key issues, which are reflected below:-

- Rural character and heritage; compatible and thriving rural economy
- Local distinctiveness; historic buildings; conservation and good design; settlement separation
- Better transport – bypass; public transport; sustainable transport; parking; relieve congestion; improve links to A1/M1; coach parking
- Achieving low carbon development and energy solutions; concern with wind turbines and fracking
- Infrastructure – broadband; education; hospital; sports facilities; SuDS; health services; younger persons activities; recreational facilities
- More exciting and vibrant town; support the market; improve shopping choice; independent traders; Melton Mowbray as the social hub; pedestrianisation; riverside; potential changes to retail due to internet; out of town retail
- Thriving economy; hi-tech jobs with better wages; homeworking; mixed economy; reduced commuting
- Improve the villages; develop large villages as hubs; village amenities and access to services; village housing to sustain villages
- Adequate, suitable, affordable, high quality housing to meet local needs not just a numbers game; housing attractive to high wage earners; balanced urban/rural split
- Tourism; food heritage; cattle market; centre of equine excellence; hotels; tourist information centre; a “brand” for the Borough; Melton in Bloom; cinema; theatre
- Sense of community; support for vulnerable; lack of crime
- Better training facilities; greater diversity in education to match job skills requirements; “University of Melton”, centre of excellence; promote educational attainment; science park
- Environment, landscape, wildlife corridors, increase biodiversity, Melton Country Park, waterways, hedgerows and trees
- Coordinated development, appropriate in scale, lots of smaller well-designed developments rather than large segments

3.14 Through the Regulation 18 consultation, further representations were also received from members of the public, developers and landowners, and statutory bodies. These are also reflected below:-

- Protect and enhance the natural environment and landscape; and, reflect the value of the natural environment to the local economy

- Minimise flood risk; incorporate SuDS; ensure water efficiency; re-use brownfield sites; maximise waste reuse and recycling
 - Conserve and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets including cultural heritage
 - Include detailed development management policies
 - Contribute to achieving each of the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development
 - Recognise links to other service centres outside the Borough
 - Ensure adequate infrastructure, services and facilities to support development (health care, broadband, schools, public transport, pedestrian and cycling access, highway network, utilities, open space and recreation; cultural facilities)
 - Promote renewable energy and energy conservation in buildings; prevent intrusive wind turbines and explore other renewable sources
 - Good community spirit; low crime rate
 - Rural and market town environment; Rural Capital of Food; improve town centre retail
 - Provide new employment opportunities; improve economic profile; tourism opportunities; rural employment
 - Preserve village character and facilities and make more vibrant; revised village envelopes
 - Good design to preserve and enhance local character
 - Housing to meet needs; affordable housing
 - Strategy for growth agreed across HMA; defined distribution of development; focus development on Melton Mowbray
- 3.15 As part of the process of creating the new Melton Local Plan, the Borough Council will produce a Statement of Consultation which will provide further detail on the processes which have been undertaken in developing the Plan.
- 3.16 The representations made through the Local Plan Reference Groups and the Regulation 18 consultation identify many of the same issues which were highlighted as being important to our community and have provided valuable input into creating the Vision, Objectives and Key Issues of the new Melton Local Plan.
- 3.17 **Developing the Vision**
 Alongside input from the Regulation 18 consultation and the Reference Group meetings, as previously discussed, the Vision for the new Melton Local Plan must have regard to the national guidance provided through the NPPF.
- 3.18 The NPPF is founded upon the principle of the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” which seeks to balance the social, economic and environmental impacts of development and our Vision should reflect this aim. The NPPF also requires that Local Plans positively seek opportunities to meet the objectively assessed development needs of an area. The long-term spatial Vision contained within the Local Plan will seek to ensure that these requirements are met.

3.19 All of the feedback referred to above were considered by the Melton Local Plan Working Group (MLPWG) at meetings held on 21st January and 15th April 2014. Taking all these matters into account, the Working Group considered that the Vision should seek to ensure that the following issues are included:-

- Countryside
- Transport
- Improved services and facilities, particularly in villages
- Climate Change
- Housing
- Economy, training and employment
- Role and character of Melton Mowbray
- Maintaining and improving quality of life
- Strong, healthy, safer communities
- Natural and built environment and cultural heritage
- Tourism, agriculture and leisure
- Meeting the need for development
- Location of development
- Reuse and recycling of resources

3.20 Whilst these themes should be included in the Vision, it is also important that the spatial vision is a concise statement. Care is needed to ensure that it fully reflects the aspirations of our community and requirements of the NPPF whilst it does not become too lengthy and expansive.

3.21 **The Vision**

As a result of the above, a Vision for the Melton Local Plan has been agreed by the Working Group as follows:

We will promote and manage development in a way which consolidates and builds upon the unique reputation, heritage and character of Melton and meets the needs of the local community, benefits the economy and maintains or improves the quality of the local environment. We will facilitate a sustainable pattern of high quality development which:

- ***Retains the character of the countryside whilst supporting land-based industries and tourism opportunities;***
- ***Meets the needs of businesses to provide a diverse, competitive and innovative economy with high levels of local employment and good opportunities for training;***
- ***Reflects the housing needs of the whole community;***
- ***Strengthens Melton Mowbray's role as a historic market town and as the main social and economic focus for the Borough;***
- ***Raises the quality, interest and diversity of Melton Mowbray's town centre and reduces the impact of traffic;***
- ***Respects the individual character and distinctiveness of Melton's villages preserving their heritage and promoting good design***
- ***Ensures that people benefit from having better access to key services and facilities to create strong, healthy, safer communities;***
- ***Seeks to address the causes and effects of climate change and reuses and recycles resources;***
- ***Provides the necessary infrastructure to support economic and population growth.***

3.22 The Working Group considered that this Vision best reflects the representations received from the Regulation 18 consultation, along with input from the Reference Groups and the requirements of the NPPF.

3.23 **Developing the Objectives**

To realise this Vision the Melton Local Plan must contain a set of Objectives which the policies within the Local Plan will seek to achieve. This will then enable arrangements for managing and monitoring long-term delivery to be set out against these objectives, and, ultimately allow the performance of the Plan to be measured.

3.24 The Local Plan must also take into account national guidance and how they relate to the Borough, whilst developing Objectives that are specific to the Borough. By considering the Objectives in the context of input from the Regulation 18 consultation and the Reference Groups; along with the objectives of the Melton Community Strategy, the priorities of the Melton Community Partnership, and, Leicestershire Together; the Melton Local Plan is more likely to develop locally distinctive policies and avoid bland policies that could be applied almost anywhere in the country.

3.25 **The Objectives**

On this basis, the Working Group recommends that the Objectives selected for inclusion in the Melton Local Plan, following the consultation processes, are as follows:

Housing

- ***Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community, including the need for affordable housing***
- ***Develop a housing stock to provide for the future aspirations for the local economy***

Accessibility and Transport

- ***Reduce the need to travel by car and improve access to public transport***
- ***Reduce traffic congestion in Melton Mowbray***

Jobs and Prosperity

- ***Enhance the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray town centre***
- ***Provide sufficient land to meet current and future employment needs***
- ***Help regenerate the rural economy***
- ***Promote the tourism potential of the Borough through its food, equestrianism and heritage assets creating a Melton “brand”***
- ***Create a mixed economy with increased knowledge-based jobs and wages***
- ***Provide better training opportunities and increase educational attainment***

Environment

- ***Promote high quality and innovative design which is visually attractive, reflects local context and distinctiveness, and, contributes to a safe and accessible environment to make places better for people***

- *Reduce pollution*
- *Protect and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity*
- *Conserve the historic environment and Melton’s heritage assets*
- *Protect the rural character of the Borough*
- *Protect and manage the use of natural resources and mitigate activities that cause their loss or degradation*
- *Prepare for, limit, and adapt to climate change and promote low carbon development*
- *Reduce the risk of flooding and avoid development in areas adverse to flooding*
- *Minimise the use of energy and promote forms of renewable energy in the correct locations*
- *Ensure that the reuse and recycling of waste is maximised, and, that the use of landfill is reduced*

Community Development

- *Improve facilities for all the community*
- *Improve access to services and facilities, including health, social care, jobs, recreation, sport, education, childcare nurseries, and broadband*
- *Promote sustainable communities*
- *Improve the health of the Borough and reduce health inequalities within the community*

Safety and Protection

- *To improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime*
- *Prevent crime through secure design*

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The new Melton Local Plan will contribute to the achievement of a number of corporate priorities. There is a strong relationship with Improving Places but where possible alignment and support has been given to Supporting People. The Vision and Objectives of the new Local Plan will be aligned with the objectives of the Melton Community Strategy, the priorities of the Melton Community Partnership, and, Leicestershire Together.

4,2 The Vision, Objectives and Key Issues identified in this report will form the basis for development of a new Melton Local Plan which meets the needs, priorities and aspirations of residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders. It is intended that they will form the “golden thread” which allows the development of a Melton Local Plan Issues and Options document for future consultation which truly reflects the wishes of the community.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Plan budget has covered the production of the Vision and Objectives and no further financial implications have been identified.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The new Melton Local Plan will be prepared under the framework provided by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the changes to the regulations which underpin the Act with the publication of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Regulation 18 consultation is the first statutory step in this process.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 The Vision of the new Local Plan seeks to create safer communities whilst one of the Objectives is “To improve community safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime”.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 Public bodies are required by law to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) relating to race, disability and gender. It is now intended that the new Melton Local Plan will undergo an Integrated Impact Assessment which will ensure that equalities are fully embedded into the development of the Local Plan. This approach has been developed and agreed through the “check and challenge” process.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 Probability



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		3		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F			2	1
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic



Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Failure to satisfactorily meet the requirements of statutory legislation
2	Failure to comply with the requirements of the NPPF
3	Failure to address the key issues identified by the community

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 The Vision seeks to address the causes and effects of climate change and there are a number of objectives which relate to this aim. This will ensure that climate change remains central during the development of the new Melton Local Plan.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 A six week period of consultation was carried out under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Consultation has also taken place through the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups (see paras 3.7 and 3.8 above). The representations received have informed the report. Full details of the feedback received from these activities are available as background papers.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are indirectly affected.

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Date: 15th April 2014

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Responses to 'Regulation 18' consultation
Feedback from the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups